

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /136 W

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P 162053Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6184

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 5032

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, PINT, PFOR, CI

SUBJ: CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS: ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL

1. ON SUNDAY OCT 14 EMBASSY DUTY OFFICER RECEIVED TELEPHONE CALL FROM FATHER GERALD WHELAN, RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL IN SANTIAGO, TO REPORT MILITARY HAD INTERVENED HIS SCHOOL, BECAUSE OF ALLEGED "MARXIST INDOCTRINATION;" APPOINTED ADMINISTRATIVE COMMISSION OF FIVE MEMBERS INCLUDING ONE MEMBER OF SCHOOL FACULTY, FATHER PROVISANO, AN AMERICAN CITIZEN; AND DEMANDED THE WITHDRAWAL OF FATHER WHELAN AND FATHER ROBERT PLASKER FROM THE SCHOOL.

2. DURING MY COURTESY CALL ON NEW MINISTER OF EDUCATION OCT 15 HE RAISED THIS SUBJECT AND CONFIRMED GENERAL LINES OF WHELAN'S REPORT. CASTRO SAID THERE WAS NO OCCUPATION OF THE SCHOOL, BUT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ITS OPERATION HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED TO A COMMISSION. HE SAID THIS ACTION HAD BEEN TAKEN BECAUSE OF THE MARXIST ORIENTATION OF THE SCHOOL'S LEADERSHIP AND STRONG COMPLAINTS ABOUT IT BY PARENTS. THE MINISTER POINTED OUT THAT CHILEAN AUTHORITIES HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH THE EXPERIMENTAL CHARACTER OF MANY OF THE SCHOOL'S PROGRAMS, WANT THE SCHOOL TO CONTINUE IN OPERATION AND HOPE THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS WILL REMAIN IN CHILE. AT THE SAME TIME, FOR THE REASONS ALREADY NOTED, THEY ARE ANXIOUS THAT WHELAN (A NATIONALIZED CHILEAN AND FORMER U.S. CITIZEN), FATHER ROBERT PLASKER (THE
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HOLY CROSS SUPERIOR HERE AND A U.S. CITIZEN), FATHER PHILIP

DEVLIN (REPORTED U.S. CITIZEN) AND FATHER ROBERTO NEICHARDT (REPORTED EITHER A U.S. OR ARGENTINE CITIZEN), DEPART CHILE. HE NOTED THAT ACTION ON THE CASES OF THESE PERSONS WAS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR RATHER THAN THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION.

3. I OBSERVED THAT, WITHOUT WISHING IN ANY WAY TO INTERFERE IN CHILEAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND FULLY RECOGNIZING THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT TO PROCEED IN THIS MATTER, THERE WOULD SEEM TO BE ADVANTAGES TO THE COOPERATIVE EFFORTS OF OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS IF THIS MATTER WERE NOT ALLOWED TO BECOME A SUBJECT OF PUBLIC CONTROVERSY. TO THAT END I SAID I WOULD BE WILLING, IF THE CHILEAN GOVERNMENT WISHED, TO EXPLORE WHETHER THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER THE TRANSFER FROM CHILE OF THE INDIVIDUALS MENTIONED BY THE MINISTER. CASTRO GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED MY OFFER.

4. SHORTLY AFTER RETURNING FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, I RECEIVED A TELEPHONE CALL FROM NOTRE DAME PROFESSOR WALTER LANGFORD NOW IN MEXICO CITY. HE RELAYED A MESSAGE TO ME FROM FATHER THEODORE HESBURGH OF NOTRE DAME REPORTING THAT FATHER HESBURGH HAD SPOKEN TO PROVINCIAL LEWERS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE HOLY CROSS WHO INTENDS TO COME TO SANTIAGO TO EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF A SOLUTION VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TO THAT WHICH I SUGGESTED TO THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION. I INTEND TO CALL THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION TODAY TO TELL HIM THAT PROVINCIAL LEWERS WILL BE ARRIVING TO EXPLORE THIS POSSIBILITY.

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